A NARRATIVE IN ONE SCENE

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By

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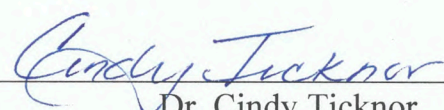
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ABSTRACT

Filmmakers are visual storytellers, thus it is important to understand basic film theory as well as the elements of a narrative, such as voice, look, and feel. It is just as important for filmmakers to understand how film theory and the elements of a narrative work together to effectively convey stories to the people viewing the film. In this thesis, I researched basic film theory and analyzed three personally influential movies and directors including Charlie Chaplin's *Modern Times* (1936), Juan Antonio Bayona's *The Impossible (2012)*, and Akira Kurosawa's *The Seven Samurai (1954)*. I chose one technique from each of the the films, synthesized them into an original scene, and described the process of creating the scene.

INDEX WORDS: *Film Theory, Look and Feel, Chaplin, Kurosawa, Bayona*

ABSTRACT

Filmmakers are visual storytellers, thus it is important to understand basic film theory as well as the elements of a narrative, such as voice, look, and feel. It is just as important for filmmakers to understand how film theory and the elements of a narrative work together to effectively convey stories to the people viewing the film. In this thesis, I researched basic film theory and analyzed three personally influential movies and directors including Charlie Chaplin's *Modern Times (1936)*, Juan Antonio Bayona's *The Impossible (2012)*, and Akira Kurosawa's *The Seven Samurai (1954)*. I chose one technique from each of the the films, synthesized them into an original scene, and described the process of creating the scene.

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Introduction

It is not uncommon for children to watch movies such as Bruce Lee, Jackie Chan, and

films like *The House of Daggers* and Ang Lee's *Crouching Tiger Hidden Dragon,* then mimic

the movements of the heroic master of martial arts depicted on the screen. Many people also

watch movies that include magical wonderlands like the *Harry Potter* series and *The Chronicles*

of Narnia: The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe or realistic fiction films that address

important issues, such as religious extremism in Qasim Basir's *Mooz-lum.* After viewing these

films, one may find just how much cinema can move emotions, impact people, and influence

them to take action. For instance, the aforementioned movies may cause viewers to feel

confident that they are a martial arts master who could travel to magical lands and stand up for

any and all Muslims in America. Movies such as Ghandi may convey inspire viewers to take

action. Aside from entertainment, movies are used as a medium for calling people to action,

raising awareness about issues that need attention, and presenting another point of view to those

who watch.

As a communication major, taking advantage of Video Production I and Video

Production II courses served as a way to explore the behind-the-scenes work of video

production. Whether being 100 percent sure of what area in the film industry one would like to

work in or not, it is beneficial to have adequate knowledge of filming, editing, directing, camera

work, and knowledge of the pre-production, production, and post-production processes of

filmmaking. Having such knowledge heightens the awareness of what changes in production

could turn a good project into a great project. In order to demonstrate and strengthen the

knowledge gained from being a communication major and from the video production classes

taken at Columbus State University, I planned, researched, and worked on a project which

allowed me to create a narrative in one scene.

The "A Narrative in One Scene" project called for an analysis of the narrative style and

techniques used by three personally influential directors or movies of my choice. I analyzed

shot-motivation, look, feel, and the overall story progression. Out of my three choices, I chose

one of the styles or techniques that stood out the most—one from each—then synthesized the

techniques into one original scene. The scene introduces a story using the elements of a narrative

in combination with the synthesized techniques.

I analyzed how Charlie Chaplin was able to develop and progress a story with no vocal

narration by establishing context and how Juan Antonio Bayona used a unique combination of

sound, the absence of sound, visuals, and movement to create a certain look and feel in *The*

Impossible (2012). The analysis also revealed Akira Kurosawa's style of storytelling through the

use of movement. After analyzing the directors and movies, I compiled my analysis, created a

production plan and description of the production, description of the scene, description of the

techniques that I used within the scene, problems that I ran into during the process and what I

learned and would do differently with the project.

Film Theory

Storytelling is an art of words, but in a film, filmmakers tell stories with visuals and audio that stimulate emotion, question ethics and, redefine logic. In order to produce a visually stimulating recount of a story, one must consider the voice in which the story is told and the Mise-en-Scene or the look and feel of the story (Welsch, 1997). There are many aspects that contribute to the look and feel. According to Giannetti (1995), the elements that contribute to the look and feel of a scene include dominant and subsidiary contrast, lighting key, shot and camera proxemics, angle, color values, lens/filter and stock, density, composition, framing, depth, character placement, staging positions, and character proxemics.

Voice. There are two kinds of voices that filmmakers use to narrate a story in their film. The most easily recognizable one is the narrative voice. With the narrative voice, the audience knows exactly what is going on in the film since the narrator or filmmaker explicitly tells the audience what is happening to the characters on screen. The other kind of voice that filmmakers use is the dramatic voice. The dramatic voice is a little less easier to detect since it is implicit. The narrator or filmmaker does not tell the story which leaves the audience to figure it out on their own. Dramatic voice allows the audience to experience the narrative in the same way that the characters on screen experience it and the characters within the film tell the story. The dramatic voice "conceals the filmmaker's voice behind the characters" (Dancyger and Rush, 2007).

Dominant, Subsidiary Contrasts and Color Values. The first place or thing on the screen that attracts a viewer's eyes is known as the dominant. Considering the dominant of a scene allows the director to think about how the story appears to the audience. It is important to

consider why the audience is attracted to this place or object and how the attraction relates to the relationship between the viewer and the movie. The second most eye-catching object or place on screen is considered known as the subsidiary contrasts. It is not unheard of for directors to consider the color value or what colors are dominant in a scene and what these colors symbolize when they take into account the dominant and subsidiary contrasts of a scene (Giannetti, 1995). An object may act as the dominant or subsidiary contrast in a scene while being the dominant color as well. Imagine a scene where a character sits alone in a room wearing an orange shirt with walls that are tinted a dark dull orange color. This may indicate distress in the scene or reflect the emotions of the character. In *Figure 1*, the first thing that the eye is attracted to is the suitcase, which also is the dominant color red. The second thing the eye is attracted to is the dark figure coming into the frame with the suitcase. The red color can symbolize various emotions, but in the case of a character who is leaving, red may symbolize pain. An object possessing a dominant color may attract the eye of the viewer while implying or representing a feeling or emotion such as anger, sadness, or envy.

Lighting Key. Like with dominant, the lighting in a scene may draw the viewer's attention to certain objects within the frame. Directors typically utilize two kinds of lighting in a scene—high-key or low-key lighting. With high-key lighting like in *Figure 2*, the entire scene is evenly lit. There are no dark spaces within the frame. This kind of lighting is usually seen in fantastical movies such as *The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe*. However, with low-key lighting like in *Figure 2*, there are darker areas in the frame and also a high contrast within the frame. Imagine an old black and white horror flick from the 1960s. Perhaps the image of partially shadowy faces come to mind. The shadows that show on partially

shadowy faces in film are a direct result of low-key lighting. Low-key lighting is usually seen in thriller, mystery, suspense and horror films.

Shot and Camera Proxemics. While watching a movie, one may notice how characters appear close or far away from the audience. This is due to shot and camera proxemics. Shot and camera proxemics typically deal with how the camera is positioned in relation to the action that it is filming (*Figure 3*). Camera proxemics are represented through nine different shots including extreme wide shot, wide or long shots, full shots, medium long shots, medium shots, medium close up, close ups, extreme close ups, and eye level shots (*Figure 4*). An important rule to remember when dealing with shot and camera proxemics is to never cross the imaginary axis or line between two characters in a scene. The 180-degree rule (*Figure 5*) states that the camera stays on one side of the line. If directors crossing the line, the shot continuity of the scene would be broken since crossing the line would flip the side of the frame that the characters appear. It will cause the audience to be distracted since they will have to make sense of the new scenery being presented to them and they will have to reestablish who the characters are. Directors also use the 180-degree rule in combination with shot and camera proxemics to establish a certain voice. Shooting on one side of the line with a wide shot "tends to emphasize an outside position" (Rush 1997). This outside position allows the director to tell the story using the narrative voice rather than the dramatic voice.

Directors also tend to use the 180-degree rule since it stimulates the use of shot/reverse shot like, a technique used to create the feeling of conversation. While positioning the camera on one side of the invisible axis, the shot will cut to character A, then cut to the character B while the dialogue continues. This technique shows who is talking and it shows character B's reaction

to what character A is saying. This helps viewers feel as if they are there in the room with the characters and witnessing the conversation between them. Although the shot/reverse shot technique "does not provide the optical point of view of someone watching a conversation, it structures visual information in a familiarly patterned way" (Berliner and Cohen, 2011). Shot/reverse shot helps directors to create the illusion and makes the film seem more believable and realistic.

Angle. The angle in which the camera is positioned while filming is important to keep in mind when framing a scene (*Figure 6*). In relation to the 180-degree rule, there is a specific angle known as the eyeline match angle which allows the director to shift between using the narrative voice and the dramatic voice to tell the story. Eyeline match angle (*Figure 7*) is achieved by positioning the camera behind one character and at eye level, which brings the audience "inside of the scene" and "identifies the character as the agent responsible for what the audience sees (Rush, 1997).

Angle is an element that directors often use in combination with shot and camera proxemics. An example of how angle shot and camera proxemics work together is shown in Jeff Rush's analysis of Godard's 1966 film *Masculine/Feminine:*

> Paul gazes out a Metro train and appears to be searching for Madeline's apartment window. In what might be a reverse shot, Madeline looks out her window at a passing train. So strong is our desire to make connections, at both the spatial and the character level, that we work to believe they are looking at one another. But we have absolutely no knowledge about where the characters are located or what they are looking at, and, in

fact, the screen direction seems purposely mismatched to further undercut any confidence
we might assume (1997).

It is important to understand the way that angle, shot, and camera proxemics work together
because these elements are vital to shaping the audience's understanding of the setting within the
scene. It also helps to strengthen the believability of the scene, which determines the amount of
power and influence the scene will have on those who view it.

Density and Composition. In some films such as Ingmar Bergman's *Persona (1966)*, the
scenes are kept relatively simple, like in the opening scene where the only objects in the frame is
a boy on a cot-like bed. Action movies tend to have scenes that are filled with people or objects.
This is known as density. According to Giannetti (1995), density refers to the amount of visual
information that is packed in a scene. Utilizing low density directors to create an eerie,
otherworldly feeling. Directors may organize the objects on screen and strategically place them
in certain areas within the frame. This is known as composition and is also important for
directors to consider. Composition, according to Giannetti (1995), refers to how the screen space
is organized, what objects are placed where and the design of the placement. Directors usually
use composition together with density when objects in the scene are placed together in one area
of the frame while other areas remain almost or completely empty of objects. This is similar to
how I composed the opening of my scene (*Figure 8*). Utilizing composition allows the
filmmaker to create a comfortable, lonely or isolated look and feel within the scene.

Framing and Depth. Many people forget that film and photography is one in the same. The only difference is that a picture is one picture while a video is a series of multiple pictures captured one after the other in quick succession. When people edit pictures, they crop and frame them depending on what they want viewers to see. Framing in film is similar. It refers to how tight or loose the shot is and if the characters have little room to move or enough room to move freely in the frame (Giannetti, 1995). In *Figure 9*, I used a close up shot in my scene which makes the frame tight and limits the movement of the character within the frame. Depth refers to the use of foreground, middleground, and background and the relationship between them (*Figure 10*). Horror films often utilize depth when the director chooses to foreshadow the death of an unsuspecting character by placing the character in the foreground or midground and placing the killer in the background. Shifting the focus from the foreground or midground to the background and back to the foreground gives the audience information that the character does not yet know. This allows the director to create a suspenseful feeling in the scene.

Character Placement, Staging Positions, and Character Proxemics. In my scene, I kept distance between the character in red and the main character in the mask to create a feeling of uneasiness between them. This is known as character placement. Character placement refers to the space in which the character occupies in the frame (*Figure 11*). I placed the character in red slightly to the right of the main character in the mask, which kept the character in red from blocking the character in the mask. This is known as staging position, or how the characters are positioned in relation to the camera, while character proxemics refers to how the characters are positioned in relation to each other (Giannetti, 1995). The directors choice in how depth, composition, angle, shot, and camera proxemics are utilized influence character placement, stage

positions, and character proxemics. Character placement, stage positions, and character

proxemics are likely the most identifiable in look and feel, but directors utilize each of the 14

elements together to create a look and feel unique to their narrative style. Directors such as

Charlie Chaplin, Juan Antonio Bayona, and Akira Kurosawa also utilized some, if not most of

the elements throughout their careers.

Movies Analyzed

      Analysis of Charlie Chaplin's *Modern Times (1936)*. In Charlie Chaplin's *Modern*

Times (1936), the story progresses without the use of dialogue and it relies heavily on the

characters' actions. The characters' actions are usually very dramatic and carried out in a grand

way in order to express the emotion that the character is feeling at a particular time. The music

selection matches the mood or emotions of the characters in the scene and the overall event that

progresses the story. Like many of Chaplin's films, he uses high-key lighting which distributes

light evenly and reduce shadows within the frame. This gives the film a lighthearted feeling as he

addresses issues of overworking workers, unemployment, and society's lack of awareness of

unemployed marginals in modern society during the time by using comedy. High-key lighting

works well for his style because there is no attempt to "create a striking visual contrast" in his

films (Fabe 2014). Due to the nature of silent films and Chaplin's comedy and editing style,

Chaplin tells the story using narrative voice more so than dramatic voice. Chaplin uses the

narrative voice to show what will happen to the main character before the main character is

aware of what will happen to them. This style aids Chaplin's comedic style by providing the

audience with a sense of dramatic irony.

In terms of sequencing, Chaplin uses establishing shots to establish the setting. The establishing shots manifest in the form of wide shots to capture groups of people going to work, resembling sheep being herded into the field to work. He captures a shot of the boss monitoring workers. These shots work together to establish the environment and setting just before introducing the main character who reveals Charlie Chaplin's criticism of work society for overworking workers. After introducing the main character, Chaplin introduces the element that pushes the story and the character forward—the feeding machine that eliminates lunch breaks. It is a dramatic, fantastic element that plays on the absurdity that workers face in real life. Issues with this element drive the story to the next scene where the main character reaches his breaking point of being overworked. With blocking, the character leads the scene to the outside world where he gets into trouble. The story progresses to the main character's breakdown, which leads to him going to the hospital, quitting his job, and starting a new life. Charlie Chaplin progresses the story by playing on the character's frequent dealings with bad luck. He uses a wide shot of busy streets, establishing the context just before having the character trip. The character is often in the wrong place at the wrong time, like when a truck drives by and a flag falls from the truck. The main character tries to return it. His innocent display of good character mixed with his unwavering streak of bad luck gets him arrested, which pushes the story along.

Chaplin introduces a new character with a title screen to establish the setting and background information. The secondary character is shown to be from a poor family, who goes against society to help feed her sisters. He uses a title screen to transition back to the main character and give information to establish the setting of his situation and two new problems. The main character becomes caught up in the problems and it pushes the story forward to another

title screen that introduces society's issue—unemployment. Chaplin uses these title screens in order to transition back and forth between the lead male and lead female characters while establishing the context of their relationship that otherwise could not be established given the nature of silent films.

Chaplin uses mid-shots, in combination with sound effects and music, to capture a comedic moment. He uses wide shots to establish the setting of the scene and to show the chaos that is happening because of the main character to which he is blind. Chaplin combines these shots with circus-like music to create the amusing and laughable feeling of the scene as the main character tries to accomplish a task. Close-up shots are utilized to show the hilarious mishaps.

The majority of the shots that Chaplin uses are static long shots or medium shots with only occasional close-ups for dramatic emphasis. According to Marilyn Fabe (2001), Charlie Chaplin's editing is nearly invisible because the shots are linked together with the goal of conveying the narrative smoothly, not to make a comment, create a striking visual contrast, or to distort real time and space for dramatic effect. Fabe (2001) also notes that the lighting in Chaplin's films are usually high-key in the sense that the entire frame was evenly lit with reduced shadows, and the camera is usually still unless action needs to be reframed—in which case, the camera only moves a little. There are no expressive camera angles or movements, no distorting optical effects, nor any fancy forced-perspective sets (Fabe, 2001).

Analysis of Juan Antonio Bayona's *The Impossible (2012)*. *The Impossible* (2012) directed by Juan Antonio Bayona is a beautifully crafted film based on the true story of a family from the UK who spends Christmas in Thailand at the time that the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami struck. Bayona's combined use of shot, shot-motivation, sound, coloration, look and feel, and

story progression allows the audience to experience the tragic and triumphant story of Maria

Balon and her family.

Bayona immediately starts the film with a wide shot to establish the situational context of

the scene. The situation is an airplane in flight. The scene then moves to the inside of the plane to

establish the setting of the scene and introduce Maria, the lead and most dynamic character of the

movie, in a close shot. Bayona uses shots framed at the eye level of each character to simulate

the natural turn-taking nature of dialogues, while also utilizing close-up shots. Proxemics,

according to Tricia Welsch (1997), is what kind of shots are used and how far the camera is

away from the action. Bayona uses a wide shot looking onto the resort and beach from the sea.

This switches the voice from dramatic to narrative voice. Through the narrative voice, the

viewers are shown that the sea is calm; however, suspenseful music tells the viewers that there is

a problem that will come from the sea and move inward to the beach and resort. Bayona uses

close-up shots to capture the facial expressions and emotions of the characters. He also uses

silent zoom-ins to enhance the dramatic voice, such as when Lucas and Maria were depicted on

the table in the hospital.

During the scene when Maria's son comes into her room, Bayona uses a birds' eye angle

as the son climbs into bed. Maria turns off the lights and scene becomes completely dark with

only Maria's voice giving information to the audience. The director uses the darkness to cut to an

outside scene utilizing the rule of thirds while framing a beetle on plants. Bayona's use of the

rule of thirds creates beautiful images because, according to Long Mai et al (2011), the rule of

thirds places "important objects along the imagery third lines or around their intersections"

which produces images that are highly aesthetic. He cuts to a shot of flowers and a lizard while

still utilizing the rule of thirds. Bayona continues to use the rule of thirds after he cuts to a shot of

a man walking out of the scene towards the camera and a woman walking into the scene away

from the camera. The camera follows the woman as the audience hears voices of the main

characters. The rule of thirds is an example of the look and feel elements known as framing and

character placement. Welsch (1997) describes character placement as the part of the frame that

the character occupies. In contrast to character placement, Bayona also uses shot motivation in

the form of off camera voices as a means to transition into the next scene. The first three cuts

previously mentioned establishes the environment of where the scene is taking place and the shot

of the people walking serves as a transition from narrative voice to dramatic voice. It also brings

the audience into the story as spectators. This scene depicts movement as one of the techniques

that Bayona utilizes to establish shot-motivation.

        In the previously mentioned example of movement, Bayona directs people to make the

movement. However, he introduces Maria through camera movement at a low angle in order to

bring the audience into the scene. Bayona transfers the movement to the character when she

drops a page of the book that she is reading and reaches down to retrieve it. This transfer of

movement introduces the character in a smooth transition and shifts the voice from narrative

voice to dramatic voice, which allows the audience to experience the story the same way that the

characters experience the story. In the scene where the boys open their Christmas gifts, Bayona

uses movement to transition to a different scene. Another example of how Bayona utilize

movement is when the boys open a gift containing a red ball which they bounce, then the scene

transitions to the boys kicking the ball on the beach. Bayona uses wind movement to suggest a

change in the mood of the story and that something is about to happen. Bayona combines his use

of movement with a beautiful aesthetic to establish the look and feel.

The look and feel consist of very vivid and saturated color. Bayona includes very warm and highly saturated scenes in order to create a beautiful aesthetic. Bayona shows the happiness of the family while suggesting their happiness will be interrupted through the narrative voice and through dialogue, such as when the boys noted that their lantern floated the opposite direction that everyone else's lanterns floated. Repeatedly showing the calm sea adds to the suspense and the aesthetic.

One of the most aesthetically pleasing elements and the technique that stood out the most is Bayona's use of sound and light. He uses little or no sound after a scene that has loud sounds. These scenes include the swimming scene when Maria is in the hospital and under anesthesia. In some parts of the movie there was no dialogue, but only yelling to show the struggle and pain of the characters. Bayona uses light, dim, low-key lighting and blackouts to transition into the next scene. In the scene where the middle boy goes into his parents' room, there is just enough light for the boy and Maria to be seen. She turns on the lights and more of the room is lit, then turns off the light—a blackout—to transition into the next scene. Bayona uses light and sound to establish the dramatic voice. He also uses the lack of light and the lack of establishing the setting in order to show the confusion of the characters. The lack of sound and the ringing mirrored what Lucas experienced when the second wave of the tsunami rolled in. Close-ups and the absence of sound with calm music playing in the background allow viewers to see the story the way Maria sees it and creates a beautiful and moving look and feel. Maria's dream, while she is under anesthesia in the hospital, is a powerful testament to the movie's use of light, color, composition and sound to create a beautiful aesthetic while depicting a tragic event. Going back and forth

between the noise of the tsunami and the silence of the operating room, the circling slow motion

of Maria in the water, her lingering scream, the silence and slow motion while Maria is

submerged in calm water and the steadily rising and rapid strumming viola strings as Maria's

hand emerges from beneath the water in slow motion creates a look and feel that symbolizes

Maria's dynamic transformation and the family's ability to triumph over tragedy.

The story progression begins with a family who has a good life then faces a potential

problem before facing the main and bigger problem of the story. The family goes through the

problem as things get worse before ending on a happy note. During the lantern scene, the

family's lantern veered off from the rest of the lanterns that were released by the visitors of the

resort. One of the boys makes the observation, "it's going a different way than all of the others,"

alerting the audience that the family is a dynamic one. These hints in dialogue given by the

dramatic voice and the hints given by the narrative voice helped to progress the story. With the

combined use and lack of use of movement, sound, light, story progression, and warm and

saturated shots, Bayona was able to capture the story of Maria Balon and her family in an

astounding visual narrative.

Analysis of Akira Kurosawa's *The Seven Samurai (1954)*. Bayona's use of movement

is a sign of a profound sense of cinematic narration. Movement is also one of the most profound

stylistic techniques used by Akira Kurosawa. He utilized movement as a means to express the

emotions of his characters and tells the story. By using movement in the background and

movement of the characters in the scene, Kurosawa is able to tell the story to the audience with

images rather than by telling them the story with dialogue. Because cinema is about telling a

story through visuals in a way that is relatable to the audience, this technique stood out the most

as one that contributes to the effectiveness of Kurosawa's films. Kurosawa's use of movement, especially the movement of nature, allows the audience to connect with the emotions of the characters and thus, relating to the narrative shown in front of them.

Immediately Kurosawa begins with the movement of groups and movement of the camera. He expresses the sorrow and vulnerability of the villagers by directing them to sit in a group while holding their knees. The overall feeling of the scene is expressed by having the villagers lift their heads and lower them simultaneously—his use of group motion. Kurosawa shows that the villagers are on a quest to find a solution to their problem when he combines group and camera movement as the villagers walk together. He uses group motion with extras by having the people in the fore and background move around the villagers as they look for a hungry samurai to defend their village.

During a night, Kurosawa uses the movement of nature to capture the emotion of the scene and the emotion of how the villagers are close to giving up their mission to find samurai to protect their village. He combined the downward sitting movement of the villagers with the downward movement of the falling rain. In the scene for the next day, Kurosawa uses the movement of nature through the wind while the villagers were trying to get a look at the newcomer.

Kurosawa achieves a fluidity in the scene by making seamless cuts. While the old samurai is getting his hair shaved off, villagers in shock say nothing; instead, their emotions are conveyed by their blocking or their movement within the frame. Kurosawa cuts into the movement and continues the scene with the corresponding movement from another shot and angle. This technique hides the fact that there was any editing at all. Kurosawa follows the

characters with the camera in one continuous shot switches between close-up, wide, over the shoulder, rear wide shots before cutting to the next shot of the scene. This camera technique combined with the editing technique creates very fluid scenes that allows the audience to feel as if they are a part of the action.

Techniques Used in *The Mask of the Mockingbird*

After analyzing the three movies, I decided which techniques I would duplicate into the scene. My scene opened by fading slowly from black with the music of "When the Mockingbirds are Singing in the Wildwood" playing, the camera slowly creeps in on the character sitting on the park bench alone, seemingly enjoying the beauty and peacefulness of her surroundings. At certain points in the scene, the music lowered in volume, echoed or skipped, which creates a certain feel similar to Bayona's use of sound and no sound. Like Charlie Chaplin, I used wide shots to establish the setting in which the story takes place. In mainstream films, the narrative voice is most apparent at the beginning of scene sequences, such as in the opening of Hitchcock's *Psycho (1960)* when the camera descends from the sky and enters through the window of a room. According to Rush (1997) "this sense of narrative presence is heightened by the titles identifying time and place of the shots" and the camera movement motivates change in the shots. The scene also includes flashbacks to give the audience background information on how the woman came to be in her current state—a technique inspired by my own creative processes. The flashbacks and the present time parts of the scene also raise questions about events that will happen in the woman's future—an episodic element.

Bayona's use of sound stood out the most in terms of creating a certain feeling within a scene. I muted parts of the soundtrack in my scene in order to aid to the eerie feeling. I also adopted Bayona's technique of using warm and highly saturated colorization, which initially creates a peaceful look and feel. In terms of composition, I applied the same rule of thirds theory that Bayona uses in order to create beautifully aesthetic and visually pleasing frames.

I adopted Kurosawa's use of movement and non-movement in order to capture the eye and create a narrative solely driven by movement. While the lead female in my scene sat in the park, the river in front of her flowed continuously, and the wind blew the tree branches that swayed behind her. When I switched the camera to the front shot of her sitting, the most noticeable movement of nature switched from water to wind as the trees behind her moved. This captures the feeling that something inside of the character is changing. I also adopted Kurosawa's way of editing the shots together by cutting into motion. In the shot where the mother leaves, I cut into the motion of her opening the door and looking back at her home as if saying goodbye just before she went out of the door.

Creating the Scene

Equipment, Props, and Materials. In order to shoot the scene, I used a Sony FDR-AX100 4K Handicam. This camera has the ability to record 4 times the quality of high definition. I used a 4K capable memory card, tripod, portable lamps and natural light for the indoor shots, Final Cut Pro X, a plastic plate for the mask, markers for drawing, and scissors for creating the mask. Actors were required to wear clothing appropriate to their character's age. The flashback scenes included four outfit changes in order to simulate a different moment in time. I

shot the present place settings by the river on the Riverwalk in downtown Columbus, while the

weather was clear and peaceful-looking. I shot the past settings in the living room of a Columbus

State University dormitory. I added a royalty-free song titled "When the Mockingbirds are

Singing in the Wildwood." The music for this scene originally reflected a calm, relaxing, and

peaceful day outside during the 1920s.

       People involved. For the "Narrative in One Scene" project, I planned to work with one or

two theatre majors who specialize in lighting and acting and a student who specialize in audio.

The scene called for four female students and one male student. One of the actresses were to look

like a pre-teen, while the other actors were to look like adults—three in their 40s and one in her

20s. The three characters that are in their 40s are parents and a step-parent. The pre-teen

character is the daughter of the parents; the character in her early 20s is the daughter in the

present-time. I shot and edited the scene. Unfortunately, I was not able to recruit theatre majors

to work the project, so I casted people who were available and agreed to play the parts.

Plan of Execution

       Video Storyboard. In order to execute the scene, I created a video storyboard. The

storyboard mapped out the scene's shot sequence, character positions, framing, setting,

transitions, and speech and audio such as background music and sound effects. I created the

storyboard by editing pictures into a playable video format and adding sound and shot transition

elements to the video. The video storyboard served as the framework of the scene and gave me

an idea of how I wanted to portray the characters and the story, as well as an idea of how the

final project would look. The pictures used in the video storyboard are of real people who match

the description of the characters created for the project. The pictures used as the setting are of

tentative locations taken in the tentative angle, which helps to express the ideal shots and angles in the scene

Video Storyboard: Mini-Pre-production. I scoped out potential areas to film the scene, which were represented by the pictures I used for the setting. I "casted" actors to portray the characters by photoshopping pictures of people onto the setting. The people photoshopped into the scene fit the image that I have in mind for the characters. Since I did not want to be limited in the kind of actors I could cast, the only requirements for the actors who would play the characters is that they must be able to look like a pre-teenage or early teenaged girl, a woman in her 20s, two women in their 40s, and a man also in his 40s—reflected by the pictures that I chose.

Video Storyboard: Mini-production. Taking and using pictures that represent the ideal setting also serve as the mini-production phase. I captured the images with the ideal framing and angles that I planned to use and at the time of day that I plan to shoot. This mini-stage was the shortest out of the three mini-stages to go through, as was the actual production stage.

Video Storyboard: Mini-Post-production. Editing the pictures into a video format and adding transitions, effects, movement, and music are components of the mini post-production. Although the video storyboard is not as long as the actual footage that I used in this project, the video storyboard contains most, if not all, of the elements that I planned to include in the scene. Of course, as I went through the actual production stages, some of the elements changed. Therefore the video storyboard was not exactly what I produced, but it served as a general idea.

Video Storyboard: The Storyboard Explained. The scene opened with a slow fade-in from black with only the music and the natural sound of birds playing. This gave the dramatic effect that I was looking for. The shot zoomed in on the woman in her 20s who was sitting with her back to the camera. Footage functioning as flashbacks flashed a few times then play the footage out in full. After each flashback, the appearance of the next one came a little quicker than the last. The first memory is of her happy family—mother, father, and child. The main shot continued to zoom in and another flash and flashback happened. This flashback was of drawing and putting on a mask just before she notices her parents becoming distant from each other.

The shot switched to a side profile medium close up shot, then another flashback happened—this time, an argument between her parents. The shot changed to frame main character's hands holding a knife. The next flashback depicted the mother and father's final argument resulting in the father telling the mother to leave, which she does. The shot shifted back to her hands where she gripped the knife tightly. The shot cut and zoomed into her face, which is covered by the same mask that she wore as a child. This mask represents the child's struggle to stay happy despite the emotional stress that she faced seeing her happy family fall apart—what she carried with her into adulthood. Another flashback happened where a new woman enters the house and greets the girl. The girl shows signs of discomfort and tension in the presence of the new woman. The main character's hands were shown again holding the knife, then she got up and walked away, leaving the audience to wonder where she was going with a butcher knife. The scene faded into black, leaving the eerily calm-sounding record music muffled and skipping in the background.

I created the scene to have an eerie look and feel, which I captured by using a frontal close-up of the mask, the close-up of the main character's hands and the happy, relaxed-sounding music. The sequence of the shots also played into the eeriness of the scene. As the scene progressed, the flashbacks appeared quicker than the last, which expressed the stress buildup and the growing agitation that the main character felt. The agitation was confirmed by the character when she grips the butcher knife. These shots are important because they capture the emotion of a character whose face is covered up and unable to send nonverbal cues that indicate sadness, anger, or agitation. Flashbacks revealed the story progression and how the main character got to where she was. The story progression followed a typical good-to-bad-to-worse progression. First, the main character's family was happy. The family began to fall apart. The main character tried to be happy, but the situation became worse. A new character was introduced as a potential antagonist. If I decide to create a show or short film series out of this storyline, I would use this as the last scene in one of the episodes. I imagine the events that happened before this scene are events that push the main character to her breaking point, so this scene would serve as a potential breaking point of the main character in terms of story progression.

Production Phases

Pre-production. The pre production phase began in January. I worked on a general timeline. The first week through the third week served as the pre-production stage. The search for a venue ended with my decision to present the finished product at Columbus State University's Towar Day. During the first week, I prepared character profile cards in order to give auditioning actors an idea of the characters they may be portraying and to give them an idea of

the narrative that the characters belong to. I created a casting call notice in order to spread the

word of my project to the theatre department. The casting call notice described the project, the

characters, the actors needed, and the shooting times. The plan was to recruit five actors for the

scene; however, I did not get a response from the notice and many of the students were busy with

their own projects or their schedules could not match up with other actors. Therefore, I had to

use word of mouth and directly ask people to play the roles. I choose those who could meet at the

same time that I could. Three other people expressed that they could play the parts and, since

time was dwindling, I decided to use one actress to play the young and adult lead female role.

Production. On the third week, I immediately begin the production stage. During the

production phase, I took the actors to the locations of shooting and went over the flooring and

placement of characters. Shortly after, I began shooting at each location. I could not find another

actress to play the mother role, so I played that role myself. This made visualizing the scene a bit

difficult, but I managed to shoot a few usable takes. Shooting inside was a bit different from

shooting outside. Due to difficulties with my camera, I needed to figure out a way to adapt to the

situation. I gathered as many lamps as I could and turned on all the lights to increase the lighting.

Since the scene had no dialogue, much of the acting was guided by me giving directions. The

argument portion of the scene was shot multiple times because the actor playing the father has a

non-confrontational and relaxed personality, which only brought calmness to the argument

portion of the scene. I had to encourage him to think of something that made him upset.

Eventually, he was able to convey more argumentative-like actions in that portion of the scene.

Many of the angles that I shot were either at eye level or below eye level. This vantage point is a bit strange to the eye and gives an eerie feeling to the scene. The production phase stretched out to two and a half weeks. On the 6th week, I began the post-production phase.

Post-production. During the post-production phase, I edited the shots together and added effects and music according to my video storyboard. Some parts of the scene did not follow my video storyboard 100 percent, but the scene followed the general shot sequence of the video storyboard. Upon editing and reviewing footage, I realized that I forgot to film the first shot of the young lead female with the mask on. This caused a problem in continuity. According to Berliner and Cohen (2011), "continuity, in both real-world perception and cinema perception, is an illusion, enabled by our brain's ability to conjoin fragmented images when such images follow certain patterns and logical principles." I thought of a way to fix the continuity gap that the error created. I set up a time to meet with my actress and film a shot of her drawing and putting on the mask. The additional footage helped to reconstruct the illusion of continuity .

To add a certain feeling of eeriness, I adjusted the color levels of the scene by adding saturation in contrast to the usual gloomy looking suspense and horror scenes. I increased the lighting through the editor, which created grain on the image. Normally, grain in videos causes information to be lost and decreases the quality of the image; however, the grain, along with a few other effects that I added, works for this part of the scene due to the nature of flashbacks and how the grain captures the fuzziness of remembering the past. I added a royalty-free song from the early 1900s titled "When the Mockingbirds are Singing in the Wildwood." The original song is a happy sounding tune, but I slowed it down to make it sound a bit somber and add to the eerie

feeling of my scene. I also added a suspense horror track behind it that features low tones in

order to help create a suspenseful feeling. I added distortion audio effects on the "When the

Mockingbirds are singing in the Wildwood" track, which distorts the sound and increases the

feeling of suspense. I also lowered the volume in some areas to add to this effect as well.

Problems in Production. While working on the project, I faced many problems in

production. During the preproduction stage, I struggled with finding actors or lighting students

within the theatre department to play the characters and help with the scene. This was mainly due

to finding people who could meet at the same time as I could and knowing who to talk to in order

to get the attention of theatre majors. Crunched for time, I asked people that I knew to help me

with the project to which they agreed. Another challenge that I faced was finding a time that all

cast members would be available to begin shooting. Unable to find a common free time, I

decided to submit a call notice to the theatre department and set a date and time of when I would

film. I chose two days out of the last week of filming—Sunday and Friday at 1 pm and 3 pm. I

suspect the call notice did not yield any results since it is difficult to bring a cast together for a

production that would not produce profit. Although I could not cast as many actors as I originally

planned, three of the original four people that agreed to play the roles were able to make it to the

shooting, which left me to fill in for the fourth person.

During the production stage, I filmed the flashback scenes inside a dormitory. Due to bad

lighting, I had to turn on every light in the room, open the blinds and use three desk lamps to

make the scene brighter. I also tried manually adjusting the camera settings and lowered the

shutter speed in order to allow more light to come into the camera. It helped to a degree;

however, the image was still very dark and time was running out. I decided to film what I could

then try to correct the lighting issue in post-production.

During post-production stage, I began to correct the color and lighting issue that I had during the production stage. As I expected, the scenes became brighter, but not without succumbing to film grain. Although in any other situation, film grain would not be ideal in a well-produced video, I liked the film grain on the flashback portions of the scene because it captured the fuzzy, not-always-clear nature of memories. For this reason, I decided to leave the film grain. While editing the footage, I realized that I forgot to film the first flashback with the young main character wearing the mask. This caused a continuity issue, so I filmed a shot with the main character drawing and putting on the mask. I placed this addition in front of original second flashback shot, which stabilized the shakiness in continuity. A solutions to these problems could include scheduling and casting a month or two in advance to ensure enough time for gathering cast and crew members and for shooting. Although I had many issues, with time being the main agent against me, I managed to create a scene close to what I envisioned.

Results

By creating a narrative in one scene, I was able to test and expand my knowledge in filmmaking, directing and editing. Prior to this project, I did not have much experience with directing and filming a scene completely on my own, so I learned a lot from the experience. One of the most interesting techniques that I learned from my research is Akira Kurosawa's masterful use of movement, the different types of movement and the combination of those types of movement. I learned how he used this technique to convey emotion and tell the story without using a traditional narrative tool, such as words or dialogue. In a bigger project, I would experiment with shots, angles, color, and settings to create a stronger aesthetic of beauty. I would

maintain an eerie look and feel by experimenting with color, light, and sound as Juan Antonio Bayona did in *The Impossible* (2012), in order to create surrealistic, suspenseful narratives that address social issues that many people experience.

Conclusion

Filming the scene has taught me to keep my eyes open to the difficulty of finding actors and other crew members for a project, especially one that would not produce revenue. I have also become more sensitive to the amount of time that it takes to produce a solid piece of work when working in film and video production. Creating a vision and recreating it in front of the camera takes a lot of time, patience, and skill. Although my camera skills are not the best, I am determined to develop my skill by practicing the techniques that I discovered in Charlie Chaplin's, Juan Antonio Bayona's and Akira Kurosawa's films.

My goal as a video, film, and movie maker is to raise awareness, inspire and encourage people to think about social issues, present a different view of these issues, and entertain as well. The goal of this scene is to encourage thoughts about divorce and the long-term psychological and emotional effects it can have on a person from childhood well into adulthood. In the future, I hope to continue this by making it into a short film and eventually a full-length suspense movie.

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APPENDICES

Film Theory

A. **Dominant, Subsidiary Contrasts and Color Values.**

    a. Figure 1. This example shows a suitcase as the dominant, The dark jacket as the subsidiary contrasts or the secondary elements and the color red as the dominant color value symbolizing distress.
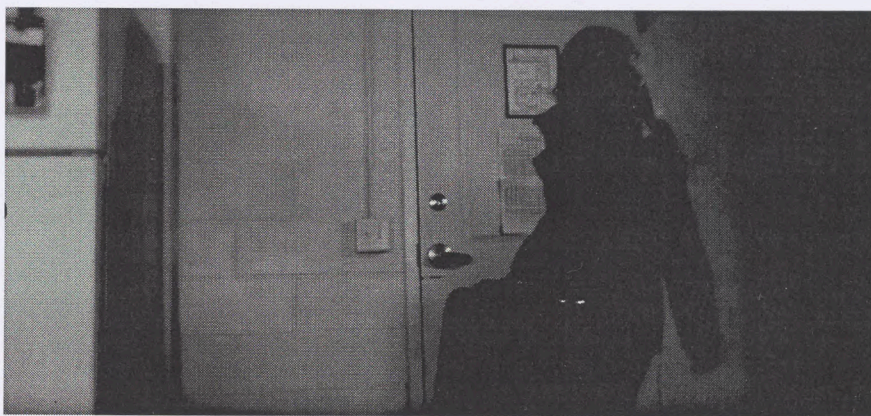
B. **Lighting Key.**

    a. Figure 2. An example of high-key (left) lighting vs low-key (right) lighting.

C. **Shot and Camera Proxemics.**

    a.   Figure 3. Camera proxemics.

    b.   Figure 4. Shot.

        i.   Figure 4.1. Extreme long shot
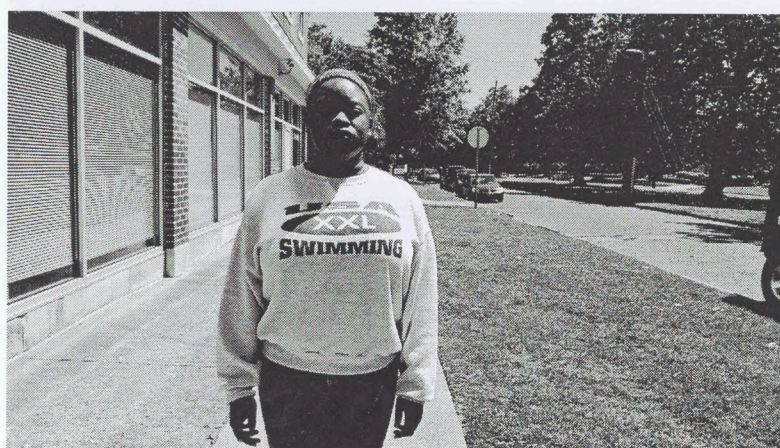
ii.   Figure 4.2. Wide or long shot

iii.   Figure 4.3. Full shot
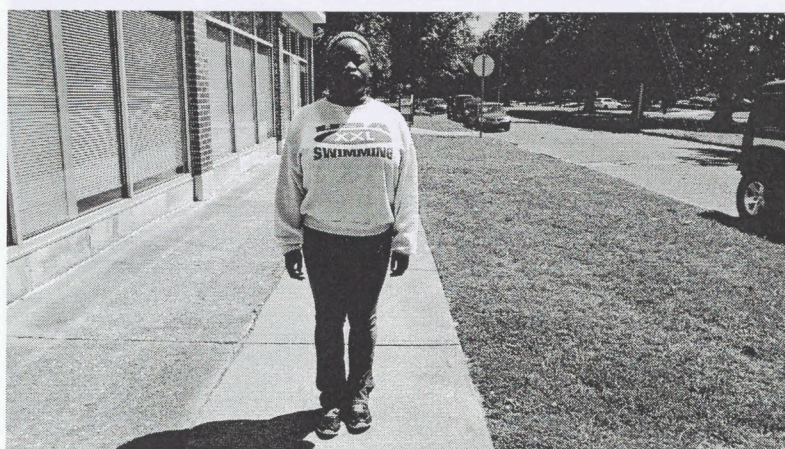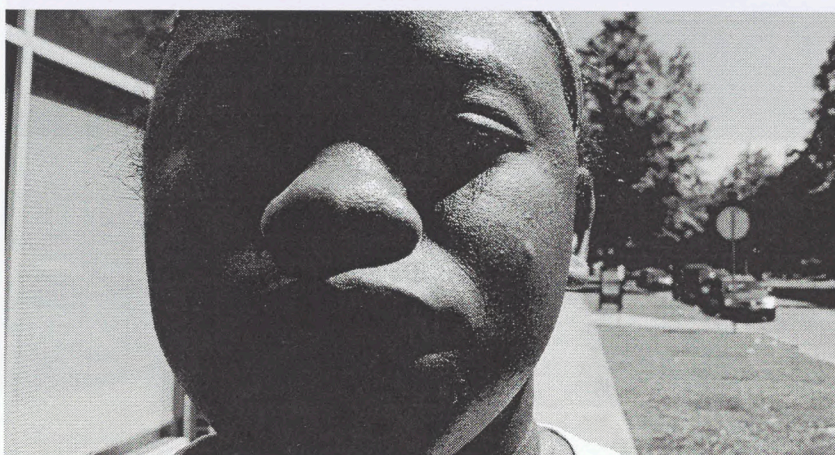

iv.   Figure 4.4. Medium-long shot

v. Figure 4.5. Medium close up

vi. Figure 4.6. Close up

vii. Figure 4.7. Extreme close up

viii.   Figure 4.8. Eye level

c. Figure 5. 180-degree rule. This shows the camera on one side of the line keeping

the character in the red dress on the left and the character in the dark shirt on the

right.

i.   Figure 5.1.

ii. Figure 5.2.

D. **Angle.**

a. Figure 6. Angle.

b. Figure 7. Eyeline match angle.

E. **Density and Composition.**

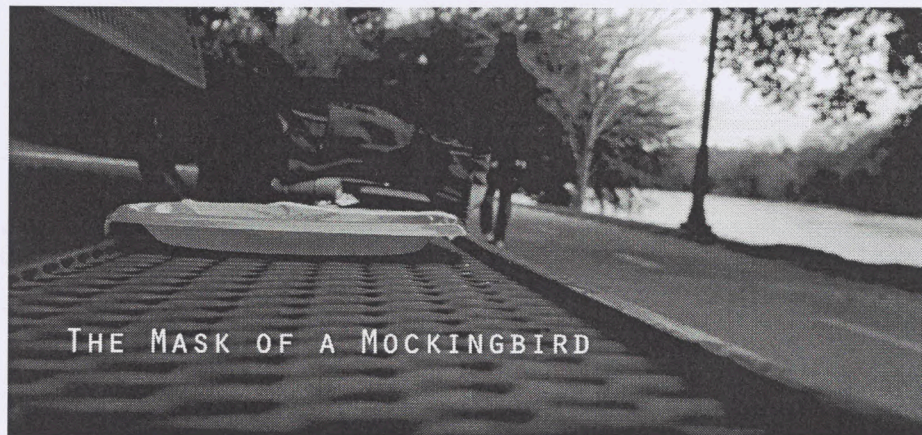   a. Figure 8. This example depicts a shot with low density and a comfortable feel.

F. **Framing and Depth.**

    a. Figure 9. Framing refers to how tight or loose the shot is. This example shows a tight shot.

b. Figure 10. This example shows depth with the character in the background, the mask in the middle ground and the title in the foreground.

G. **Character Placement, Staging Positions, and Character Proxemics.**

a. Figure 11. Each character occupy a certain space in the frame. They are positioned in a certain way in relation to the camera and in relation to each other.